

# **Center for Educational Performance and Information (CEPI)**

## **Understanding Michigan's Cohort Graduation and Dropout Rates 2011**

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## Introduction

To comply with the *No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001*, Michigan moved to a methodology in which a graduation rate includes only "on-time" graduates who earn regular diplomas within four years of entering high school. This calculation meets the guidelines provided by the National Governors Association (NGA) Graduation Counts Compact for the calculation of such rates. As more states implement the NGA standard, state-to-state comparisons will become more meaningful.

The formula for the calculation of 2011 graduation rates is possible because school districts have been tracking the enrollment of individual students since those students first enrolled in the ninth grade in the 2007-2008 school year, and have reported those data to the Center for Educational Performance and Information (CEPI). The gathering of this information at a statewide level allows CEPI to help districts track enrollments to reflect "transfers in" and "transfers out" of the districts, as well as students who exit from the public education system itself, over the course of four years.

Along with cohort four-year graduation and dropout rates, CEPI staff also calculates cohort five-year and cohort six-year rates.

## Business Rules

The following pages list the business rules and methodology used by CEPI and the Michigan Department of Education (MDE) to identify students as members of a graduation cohort and to calculate of graduation and dropout rates.

### Ungraded Students:

- Students reported in the educational setting "14" (special education ungraded setting) who are beyond the age of 18 will be included in cohort calculations. Schools will be held accountable for these students.
- Students who are reported in a traditional grade, assigned to a cohort and subsequently reported in adult education (educational setting "20") will be counted as "other high school completers" if they receive their General Educational Development (GED) certificate or "off-track graduated" if they receive their high school diploma. While reported as active adult education students, they will be "off-track continuing." These students will not be assigned to a cohort if the first time they are reported is with an educational setting of "20."

### Residency Codes:

- The following groups of students will be excluded from the cohort:
  - Under *Non-resident*:
    - Nonpublic school student (code "04")
    - Home-schooled non-resident student (code "07")
  - Under *Resident*:
    - Nonpublic school student (code "08")
    - Home-schooled resident student (code "15")

### Cohort Year:

- Students are placed into a cohort when they are first identified as ninth graders. Students who transfer into the public education system after ninth grade are placed into the appropriate cohort based on the grade in which the initial Michigan district places them.
- Students reported in educational setting "14" (special education ungraded setting) are assigned to a cohort using a computed grade (age minus 6). These students will only be placed into a cohort if they are at least 15 years old.
- Any General Collection or Student Record Maintenance (SRM) Collection in the Michigan Student Data System (MSDS) will be used to set the cohort year.

### Primary Education Providing Entity (PEPE):

The district and building held responsible for a student graduating is the PEPE.

CEPI determines PEPE based on the fall, spring and end-of-year (EOY) general collections and the SRM Collection in the MSDS.

If a student is reported as continuing (exit status "19") by only one entity for a given MSDS collection cycle, then that district and building becomes the PEPE.

If a student is reported in multiple entities in a collection, the entity which reported the greater proportion of full-time equated (FTE) membership is the PEPE.

If the exit status for a student equals 01, 02, 03, 04, 05, 06, 20, 21, 40 or 41, this is considered a terminating exit status, and PEPE is assigned to the entity in which the terminating exit status was reported.

If the exit status for a student equals any exit code other than those referenced above, PEPE remains with the last entity that reported the student as continuing.

If a PEPE district and building cannot be determined, the record goes into "resolution" within the MSDS, and a CEPI staff member will determine PEPE. Authorized users will utilize the previously accountable district/building's code until the staff member assigns the new PEPE.

When both a Unique Education Provider (UEP) and a school report a student, the school will be the PEPE for the student. However, if only a UEP (e.g., Career and Technical Education entities and Michigan Math/Science Center buildings) reports a student, it will be the PEPE for the student.

### **Schools/Facilities that will not Receive Graduation and/or Dropout Rates:**

- An entity identified as a 9th, 9th-10th or 9th-11th-grade building may have a dropout rate, but will not have a completion or graduation rate.
- An entity identified as an intermediate school district (ISD) school that does not graduate students may have a dropout rate, but will not have a completion or graduation rate.

### **Middle College Students:**

- Students submitted in the MSDS in an approved early/middle college have their cohort year increased by one. If a student moves between a high school and an early/middle college, the student's cohort year is adjusted accordingly (a year is taken away from the student's cohort year if the student transfers from an early/middle college to a high school, and a year is added to the student's cohort year if the student transfers from a high school to an early/middle college).
- Students submitted in the MSDS in approved early/middle colleges have five years to complete high school with a regular diploma AND an associate degree or other advanced certificate.

### **Subgroup Determination:**

Beginning with the 2010-2011 school year, the MDE and CEPI implemented new rules for subgroup determination for graduation and dropout rates. The change in subgroup rules was necessitated by changes in submission practices in the MSDS as well as clarification in how students are identified for program counts.

#### **Subgroups Impacted**

- Race/Ethnicity
- Gender
- Economically Disadvantaged
- Limited-English Proficient (LEP)
- Special Education (Students with Disabilities)
- Migrant
- Homeless

### Old Methodology (2010 four-year cohort and prior)

A student was assigned to a subgroup based on the prior (second-to-last) Fall or Spring General Collection reported by the PEPE within the MSDS. If the student was only reported in one MSDS collection in the current school year, that record was used for subgroup determinations.

### New Methodology

Subgroup assignment will be based on the status of the student, not whether the PEPE provided specific services. Exiting a student from a program within the school year will not remove them from the subgroup. This methodology also better aligns with program allocations that are based on total school year eligibility.

- **For the Race/Ethnicity and Gender Subgroups:** A student will be identified in these subgroups by the last certified submission of the PEPE.
- **For the LEP and Special Education subgroups:** A student will be identified in these subgroups if he or she was reported as eligible for that subgroup in any certified collection in the MSDS in the current school year by any reporting entity.
- **For the Economically Disadvantaged subgroup:** A student will be identified in this subgroup if he or she was (a) reported as eligible for supplemental nutrition in any certified collection in the MSDS in the current school year by any reporting entity, (b) directly certified, or (c) reported as homeless or migrant.
- **For the Migrant subgroup:** A student will be identified in the migrant subgroup if he or she was reported as migrant eligible for the current school year in the Migrant Education Data System.
- **For Homeless:** A student will be identified in this subgroup if he or she was reported as eligible for that subgroup in any certified collection in the MSDS in the current school year by any reporting entity.

### Implementation Plan

The new methodology will apply to all students records submitted in the 2010-2011 school year. This means that there will be students who fall under the new methodology (active students in the 2010-2011 school year) and students who also fall under the old methodology (students whom users last reported in 2009-2010 or prior years).

### Calculating Building/District/State Rates:

Each student is assigned to a cohort the first time he or she is reported as a ninth grader, or, if a transfer student, immediately upon being reported as enrolled in a high school grade. Count days are used only to determine the unit of accountability. Every student not subject to an exemption is included in graduation and dropout rates.

- Buildings in which students are ordered by the court to attend are only included in the building's rate, not the district's rate.
- Students attending the Michigan School for the Deaf and Blind will be counted in the state rates only.
- Students remain in the cohort they are assigned throughout their educational career unless they are submitted in the MSDS in an approved early/middle college. See the sections on Cohort Year and Middle College Students for more information.
- Count days are only used to determine whether the unit of accountability is state, district and/or building.
  - A student will not be included in the building-level graduation and dropout rates until the student has been reported in that building for at least two count days, based on fall and spring counts. In the event the student has been in the building for fewer than two count days, the student will be included only in the district-level and state-level rates.
  - A student will not be included in the district-level graduation and dropout rates until the student is reported in that district for a least one count day, based on fall and spring counts. In the event the student has not been in the district for at least one count day, the student will only be included in the state-level rates.

Count Dates Present	Accountability
0	State rate only
1	District and State
2 or more	Building, District and State

## Data Validation and Appeals Process

CEPI provides an appeals window for district staff members to review and request changes to graduation and dropout information on individual students in the MSDS. From July through September, district authorized users access the MSDS to view their cohort members and could request: 1) cohort status/year changes; 2) changes to district and building PEPE; and 3) linking of multiple students' Unique Identification Codes. CEPI staff members approve or deny these requests. District users could submit exit status changes for students reported in the 2010-2011 school year in the SRM Collection.

District users will not be able to request changes to student demographics, including program participation. The following data fields cannot be changed:

- Race/ethnicity
- Gender
- Supplemental nutrition eligibility
- Migrant status
- Limited English proficiency status
- Special education status
- Homeless

Preliminary rates will be made available in the Graduation and Dropout (GAD) Application to districts in August based on the EOY General Collection and again in October after the appeals window.

The ISD auditor has to submit exit status changes for any student reported in years prior to 2010-2011 as an audit finding in the GAD Application. ISD auditors complete an exit status audit between October and December in which they record any audit findings as an exit status change and modify the cohort status accordingly.

## Graduation Cohort Determination

### Determining First-time Ninth Graders

First-time ninth graders are those students who first enrolled in ninth grade during the 2007-08 school year (assigned to the 2011 cohort). As the State of Michigan has no data on students before their arrivals, students who transfer into the state and whom Michigan school district authorized users reported as ninth-graders are deemed first-time ninth-graders, regardless of their statuses in their previous residences. Students who transfer into the state as 10th through 12th-graders are placed in the appropriate cohort as if they are on track for completion in four years, along with their classmates.

### Calculating the Cohort Status

To calculate the cohort status, CEPI staff consider grade and exit status. Below is a chart of the exit status code definitions.

**Table 1**

<b>Exit Status Code</b>	<b>Exit Status Definition</b>	<b>Cohort Status Category</b>
01	Graduated from general education with a regular high school diploma	Graduated
02	Graduated from general education with a regular high school diploma and applied to a degree-granting college or university	Graduated
03	Graduated from an alternative program with a regular high school diploma	Graduated
04	Graduated from general education with a regular high school diploma and applied to a non-degree granting institution	Graduated
05	Completed general education with an equivalency certificate (GED)	Other Completer
06	Completed general education with other certificate	Other Completer
07	Dropped out of school	Dropout
08	Enrolled in another public school district in Michigan	If not located, Dropout; if located, Continuing in new district
09	Moved out of state	Exempt
10	Expelled from the school district (no further services)	Dropout
11	Enlisted in military or Job Corps prior to completion	Dropout
12	Deceased	Exempt
13	Incarcerated	Dropout
14	Enrolled in home school	Exempt
15	Enrolled in nonpublic school	Exempt
16	Unknown	Dropout
17	Placed in a recovery or rehabilitative program	Dropout
18	Left Adult Education	Dropout
19	Expected to continue in the same school district	On-track Continuing or Off-track Continuing, depending on Expected Graduation Year (EGY)
20	Received Special Education certificate of completion and exited the K-12 system	Other Completer
21	Special Education - Reached maximum age and exited the K-12 system	Other Completer
40	Graduated from a middle college with both a high school diploma and an associate degree or other advanced certificate	Graduated
41	Graduated from a middle college with only a high school diploma	Graduated
42	Graduated from another district	If not located, Dropout; if located, Graduate in new district



CEPI uses the most recently reported exit status by the PEPE to designate a student as graduated, completed, continuing in school, dropout or exempt. CEPI staff considers seven categories of students when determining cohort status:

1. On-track graduated - completed high school with a regular diploma in four years or less; or if enrolled in an early/middle college, completed high school with a regular diploma AND an associate degree or other advanced certificate in five years or less. The district user must report the student with a graduate exit date on or prior to August 31 of his or her cohort year in order to be considered an on-track graduate.
2. Other completer - completed general education with an equivalency certificate (GED), completed general education with other certificate or received special education certificate of completion and exited the kindergarten through 12th-grade (K-12) system.
3. Off-track graduated - completed high school with a regular diploma in more than four years; or if enrolled in an early/middle college, completed high school with a regular diploma AND an associate degree or other advance certificate in more than five years.
4. Off-track (+5 year) graduated - completed high school with a regular diploma in more than five years, or graduated from an early/middle college with only a high school diploma in more than five years.
5. Off-track continuing - did not complete high school in four years and is still continuing in school.
6. Dropout - left high school permanently at any time during the cohort period, or whereabouts are unknown.
7. Exempt - transferred out of the public school system (out of state, to nonpublic school, or home-school) or is deceased.

**Table 2**

Status	Corresponding Exit Status
On-track graduated	1, 2, 3, 4, 40 or 41
Other completer	5, 6, 20 or 21
Off-track graduated	1, 2, 3, 4, 40 or 41
Off-track continuing	19
Dropout (Reported & MER)	7, 8*, 10, 11, 13, 16, 17, 18, 19* or 42*
Exempt (transfer out)	9, 12, 14, 15 or residency codes: 4, 7, 8 or 15

\* If exit status code 08, 19 or 42 is used, this usually does not count as a dropout. This is only given a dropout status if the student record is not reported by the new district (08), by the same district (19) or by the graduating district (42) in the subsequent collection. This indicates the student has a missing expected record (MER) and the whereabouts of the student are unknown.

## The Cohort Four-Year Graduation and Dropout Rate

### How is the 2011 cohort four-year graduation rate determined?

CEPI calculates the 2011 cohort four-year graduation rate by tracking individual students who enrolled for the first time in ninth grade in the 2007-2008 school year and then assigns these students to the 2011 cohort. Using the cohort

method allows the state to more accurately track student movement over time. It accounts for students who leave school during one year and return in another, and it can account for students who are retained in a grade, but stay in school and graduate later than their classmates.

The total number of students who were identified as first-time ninth graders in fall 2007 formed the initial 2011 cohort. Students who transferred into the state, a district or a building at any time during the four-year period were added to the initial group. For students who moved within the public schools, CEPI updated student records to reflect the correct district and building location. These students were considered "transfers out" of the district/building they left and "transfers in" to the district/building they entered. Students who exited the public school system entirely (out of state, to nonpublic school or to home school) at any time during the four-year period are considered "exempt" and removed from the cohort. Deceased students are also exempt.

To calculate the 2011 cohort four-year graduation rate, CEPI staff places all students into one of four categories:

1. On-track graduated - completed high school with a regular diploma in four years or less; or if enrolled in an early/middle college, completed high school with a regular diploma AND an associate degree or other advanced certificate in five years or less.
2. Other completer - earned a GED certificate, other certificate, or reached special education maximum age.
3. Off-track continuing - did not complete high school in four years and is still continuing in school.
4. Dropout - left high school permanently at any time during the four-year period, or whereabouts are unknown\*.

\*If exit status code 08 (transfer), 19 (continuing) or 42 (graduated from another district) is used, this usually does not count as a dropout. This is only given a dropout status if the student record is not reported by the new district (08), by the same district (19) or by the graduating district (42) in the subsequent collection. This indicates the student has a missing expected record (MER) and the whereabouts of the student are unknown.

## Calculating the 2011 cohort four-year graduation rate

CEPI staff counts a student toward the graduation rate of the final building and/or district that the student attended during the four-year period. The number of "on-track graduated" is used as the numerator and divided by the total count of all cohort status categories. The 2011 cohort total takes into account students who transferred in the final building and/or district and students who transferred out in another public entity's rates, if the students have been located.

The following formula is utilized for calculating the cohort four-year graduation rate:

$$\frac{\text{On-Track Graduated}}{\text{2011 Cohort Total}}$$

## How is the 2011 cohort four-year dropout rate determined?

**There is no national standard for calculating cohort four-year dropout rates.** Michigan has chosen to maintain consistency by using the cohort methodology recommended by NGA to calculate this rate as well.

CEPI calculates the 2011 cohort four-year dropout rate by tracking individual students who enrolled for the first time in ninth grade in the 2007-2008 school year (assigned to the 2011 cohort) and left high school permanently at any

time during the four-year period prior to receiving a regular diploma, GED or other completion certificate.

A dropout rate is not equivalent to subtracting the graduation rate from 100 percent, because that method would count students who are "other completers" or "off-track continuing" as dropouts. Other completers are students who earned a GED or other certificate, or reached special education maximum age. Students with an off-track continuing cohort status are those who did not complete high school in four years and are still continuing in school.

To calculate the 2011 cohort four-year dropout rate, CEPI staff places all students into the same four categories used to determine graduation rates: on-track graduated, other completer, off-track continuing and dropout.

## Calculating the 2011 cohort four-year dropout rate

CEPI counts "Dropouts" as the numerator and divides by the total count of all status categories. The total of the status categories is the 2011 Cohort Total.

The following formula is utilized for calculating the cohort four-year dropout rate:

$$\frac{\text{Dropouts}}{\text{2011 Cohort Total}}$$

Some schools in Michigan offer 9th, 9th-10th, and 9th-11th grade campuses from which students do not graduate, and thus these schools do not receive a four-year graduation rate. The cohort total for these buildings is determined by the number of students who were reported at the building for two or more count days who may have transferred out of the building, but did not transfer out of the district by the time they were last reported. CEPI only computes this total for buildings where an authorized user did not report any graduates.

To help district authorized users calculate which building would be accountable for a student, relative to dropout rates, here are some examples where a student attended for at least two count dates:

- If "**Student A**" dropped out while attending a ninth-grade building, the student would only be included in the building's dropout rate, as the student did not attend any 10th-12th-grade buildings.
- If "**Student B**" attended a ninth-grade building and continued on to a 10th-12th-grade building, but eventually dropped out, the student would be included in the 10th-12th-grade building's dropout rates.
- If "**Student C**" attended a ninth-grade building and continued on to a 10th-12th-grade building where the authorized user reported this student as off-track (graduated or continuing) or an other completer, the student would not be included in any building's dropout rate, as this student did not dropout.
- If "**Student D**" transferred into the district to a 10th-12th-grade building and dropped out, the student would be included in the 10th-12th-grade building's dropout rate, as the student did not attend any ninth-grade buildings.
- If "**Student E**" attended a ninth-grade building and continued on to a 10th-12th-grade building, transferred to another district and then dropped out, this student would only be included in the new district's dropout rate.

Table 3

<b>Dropout Rate Accountable Entity for Non-Graduating Buildings</b>
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	Building	Cohort Status	Building	Cohort Status	Accountable Building
Student A	Ninth grade	Dropout	N/A	N/A	Ninth grade
Student B	Ninth grade	On-track or Off-track Continuing	10th-12th-grade	Dropout	10th-12th-grade
Student C	Ninth grade	On-track or Off-track Continuing	10th-12th-grade	Off-track (graduated or continuing) or Other Completer	10th-12th-grade
Student D	N/A	N/A	10th-12th-grade	Dropout	10th-12th-grade
Student E	Ninth grade	On-track or Off-track Continuing	10th-12th-grade in another district	Dropout	10th-12th-grade in the other district

## Understanding the 2011 Cohort Four-year Graduation and Dropout Rate Report

The 2011 cohort four-year graduation rate report contains buildings/districts where students are educated in any high school grades (9th-12th) or when students' ages are 15 or older (i.e., students who are eligible to graduate from high school). There are two calculation rules that may result in building rates not summing to district rates and district rates not summing to state rates:

1. **Court-Ordered Facilities:** Buildings in which students who have been ordered by the court to attend are not included in the district's rate, only the building's rate.
2. **Count Dates:** See section on "Calculating Building/District/State Rates" on pages 6 and 7 of this document.

## Reading the 2011 Cohort Four-year Graduation and Dropout Rate Report

The graduation and dropout rate report includes data for the state, every district and every building from which students graduate. This report is divided into the following eleven columns:

**Table 4**

Column Name	Column Definitions
District/Building Name (Code)	The first line of the report shows the State of Michigan rates, followed by an alphabetical listing of local education agencies (LEAs), then public school academies (PSAs) and then intermediate school districts (ISDs). The district-level data are identified in shaded rows. The buildings that constitute the district appear below the district name in non-shaded rows that are slightly indented. Although ISDs do not receive graduation rates, their students are included in the state rate.
First Time 9th Grade in Fall 2007	Total number of students who were identified as first-time ninth-graders in fall 2007, which was the group of students who initially formulated the 2011 cohort.
(+) Transfers In	Total number of students who transferred into the state, district or building at any time during the four-year period and remained there.
(-) Transfers Out & Exempt	Total number of transfers out and exempt students. Transfers out are students who transferred out of the district or building and were submitted by a new district. Exempt are those who transferred out of the public school system at any time during the four-year period and did not return (exited to out-of-state, to nonpublic school or to home-school). Deceased students are also exempt.
Cohort	Total number of students in the 2011 cohort for the state, for each district and for each building after adjustments were made for transfers in, transfers out and exempt students.
On-Track Graduated	Total number of students in the 2011 cohort who completed high school with a regular diploma in four years or less; or if enrolled in an early/middle college, completed high school with a regular diploma AND an associate degree or other advanced certificate in five years or less.
Dropout (Reported & MER)	Total number of students who left high school permanently at any time during the four-year period or whose whereabouts are unknown (MER).
Off-Track Continuing	Total number of students who did not complete high school in four years and are still continuing in school.
Other Completer (GED, etc.)	Total number of students who earned a GED or other certificate or reached special education maximum age.
Graduation Rate	The percentage, calculated as On-Track Graduated divided by the 2011 Cohort, of the total number of students in the 2011 cohort who completed high school with a regular diploma in four years or less.
Dropout Rate	This is the percentage, calculated as Dropouts divided by the 2011 Cohort Total, of the total number of students in the 2011 cohort who left high school permanently at any time during the four-year period, or whose whereabouts are unknown.

A cell containing "< 10" indicates there were zero or fewer than 10 total students in the cohort or in a cohort status at

the building for two count days or the district for one count day. It is possible to have "< 10" even though the first-time ninth grader, transfers in and transfers out columns have a zero total. This is due to the fact that cohort students now in the building/district for at least two count days are categorized as "exempt."

## The Subgroup Report

### Reading the 2011 Cohort Four-year Subgroup Report

Subgroups are divided into three categories, and are not mutually exclusive. These categories are:

1. Gender - males and females
2. Race - American Indian or Alaska Native (AI/AN), Asian American, Black or African-American, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander (H/PI), White, Hispanic or Latino, and Multiracial
3. Program eligibility - economically disadvantaged, LEP, migrant, students with disabilities and homeless

The 2011 cohort four-year subgroup rate report includes data for the state, every district, and every building from which students graduate, and is divided into ten columns. The columns include:

**Table 5**

Column Name	Column Definitions
District Name	This is the alphabetical listing, beginning with the state and followed by districts included in the report.
Building Name	This is the alphabetical listing of the buildings that make up the district.
Subgroup*	Divided into three categories of gender, race and program eligibility.
2011 Cohort Total**	Total number of students in the 2011 cohort for the state, for each district and for each building after adjustments were made for transfers in, transfers out and exempt students.
On-Track Graduated	Total number of students in the 2011 cohort who completed high school with a regular diploma in four years or less; or if enrolled in an early/middle college, completed high school with a regular diploma AND an associate degree or other advanced certificate in five years or less.
Dropout (Reported & MER)	Total number of students who left high school permanently at any time during the four-year cohort period or whose whereabouts are unknown (MER).
Off-Track Continuing	Total number of students who did not complete high school in four years and are still continuing in school.
Other Completer	Total number of students who earned a GED or other certificate, or reached special education maximum age.
Graduation Rate	The percentage, calculated as On-Track Graduated over 2011 Cohort, of the total number of students in the 2011 cohort who completed high school with a regular diploma in four years or less.
Dropout Rate	This is the percentage, calculated as Dropouts divided by the 2011 Cohort Total, of the total number of students in the 2011 cohort who left high school permanently at any time during the four-year period, or whose whereabouts are unknown (MER).

\* Subgroup determination for program eligibility is derived from the prior MSDS count date submission

\*\* < 10 in a cell indicates that there were more than 0 and fewer than 10 students in the cohort or in a status at the building for two count days or the district for one count day.

## The Cohort Five-Year Graduation and Dropout Rates

Cohort five-year graduation and dropout rates are calculated for students in the 2010 cohort. The five-year graduation rate is calculated in the same manner as the four-year rate, including students who graduated in the fifth year (off-track graduated) in the numerator. "On-track graduated" and "off-track graduated" are counted as the numerator and divided by the total count of all status categories (on-track graduated, off-track graduated, off-track continuing, other completer and dropout). Transfers in and out during that fifth year are accounted for as well. The total of the status categories is the 2010 Cohort Total:

The following formula is utilized for calculating the cohort five-year graduation rate:

$$\frac{\text{On-Track Graduated} + \text{Off-Track Graduated}}{\text{2010 Cohort Total}}$$

The five-year dropout rate is calculated in the same manner as the four-year rate, including those students who dropped out of high school in their fifth year. Transfers in and out during that fifth year are accounted for as well.

The following formula is utilized for calculating the cohort five-year dropout rate:

$$\frac{\text{Dropouts}}{\text{2010 Cohort Total}}$$

A building or district's cohort five-year graduation and dropout rates could be greater than, less than or equal to the cohort four-year rates. There are three reasons for this discrepancy: 1) count dates; 2) the numerator changes and 3) the denominator changes.

Students who, in their fifth year, now meet the minimum count dates will be included in that district's and/or building's rates. For example, if a 2010 cohort student was at a building for one count date in the 2009-2010 school year, that student was counted in the district rate only. If, in the student's fifth year, that off-track student attended for another count date in the same building, that student will now be reflected in the denominator of the building's five-year rates.

According to the federal regulations released in October 2008, states cannot freeze cohorts. Once a cohort has graduated, the cohort total (the denominator used in the graduation and dropout rates) cannot be "locked" at that total. The cohort total must remain "open" to allow for accountability to be placed with the correct entity for students who attend high school beyond the fourth year. Below is a table demonstrating graduation and dropout rate change examples.

**Table 6**

Graduation and Dropout Rate Change Examples				
	4-Year	5-Year	Rate Change	Possible Explanation

	Rate	Rate		
Graduation Rate	97%	97%	Remains the same	No off-track continuing students graduated in the fifth year (numerator does not change) and no off-track continuing students transferred in or out (denominator does not change).
	97%	99%	Increases	Off-track continuing students graduated in the fifth year.
	97%	95%	Decreases	Off-track students transferred into the district/building or met the minimum number of count dates in the fifth year and are still continuing (increases the denominator).
Dropout Rate	5%	5%	Remains the same	No off-track continuing students dropped out in the fifth year (numerator does not change) and no off-track continuing students transferred in or out (denominator does not change).
	5%	7%	Increases	Off-track continuing students dropped out in the fifth year.
	5%	3%	Decreases	Off-track students transferred into the district/building or met the minimum number of count dates in the fifth year and did not drop out (increases the denominator) or former dropouts complete high school (decreases the numerator).

## Reading the 2010 Cohort Five-year Graduation and Dropout Rate Report

The 2010 cohort five-year graduation and dropout rate report includes data for the state, every district and every building from which students graduate. The report is divided into the following eleven columns:

**Table 7**

Column Name	Column Definitions
District/Building Name (Code)	The first line of the report shows the State of Michigan rates, followed by an alphabetical listing of LEAs, then PSAs and then ISDs. The district-level data are identified in shaded rows. The buildings that constitute the district appear below the district name in non-shaded rows that are slightly indented. Although ISDs do not receive graduation rates, their students are included in the state rate.
First Time 9th Grade in Fall 2006	Total number of students who were identified as first-time ninth-graders in fall 2006, which was the group of students who initially formulated the 2010 cohort.
(+) Transfers In	Total number of students who transferred into the state, district or building at any time during the five-year period and remained there.
(-) Transfers Out & Exempt	Total number of transfers out and exempt students. Transfers out are students who transferred out of the district or building and were submitted by a new district. Exempt are those who transferred out of the public school system at any time during the four-year period and did not return (exited to out of state, to nonpublic school or to home-school). Deceased students are also exempt.
Cohort	Total number of students in the 2010 cohort for the state, for each district and for each building after adjustments were made for transfers in, transfers out and exempt students.
On-Track + Off-Track Graduated	On-Track Graduated: Total number of students in the 2010 cohort who completed high school with a regular diploma in four years or less; or if enrolled in an early/middle college, completed high school with a regular diploma AND an associate degree or other advanced certificate in five years or less. Off-Track Graduated: Total number of students in the 2010 cohort who



	completed high school with a regular diploma in more than four years; or if enrolled in an early/middle college, completed high school with a regular diploma AND an associate degree or other advance certificate in more than five years.
Dropout (Reported & MER)	Total number of students who left high school permanently at any time during the five-year period, or whose whereabouts are unknown (MER).
Off-Track Continuing	Total number of students who did not complete high school in five years and are still continuing in school.
Other Completer (GED, etc.)	Total number of students who earned a GED or other certificate, or reached special education maximum age.
Graduation Rate	The percentage, calculated as On-Track Graduated + Off-Track Graduated divided by the 2010 Cohort, of the total number of students in the 2010 cohort who completed high school with a regular diploma in five years or less.
Dropout Rate	This is the percentage, calculated as Dropouts divided by the 2010 Cohort Total, of the total number of students in the 2010 cohort who left high school permanently at any time during the four-year period, or whose whereabouts are unknown.

## The Cohort Six-Year Graduation and Dropout Rates

Cohort six-year graduation and dropout rates are calculated for students in the 2009 cohort. The six-year graduation rate is calculated in the same manner as the five-year rate, including students who graduated in the sixth year (Off-track graduated) in the numerator. "On-track graduated", "off-track graduated" and "off-track 5+ graduated" are counted as the numerator and divided by the total count of all status categories (on-track graduated, off-track graduated, off-track continuing, off-track 5+ continuing, other completer and dropout). Transfers in and out during that sixth year are accounted for as well. The total of the status categories is the 2009 Cohort Total.

The following formula is utilized for calculating the cohort six-year graduation rate:

$$\frac{\text{On-Track Graduated} + \text{Off-Track Graduated} + \text{Off-Track} + 5 \text{ Graduated}}{2009 \text{ Cohort Total}}$$

The six-year dropout rate is calculated in the same manner as the five-year rate, including those students who dropped out of high school in their sixth year. Transfers in and out during that sixth year are accounted for as well.

The following formula is utilized for calculating the cohort six-year dropout rate:

$$\frac{\text{Dropouts}}{2009 \text{ Cohort Total}}$$

A building or district's cohort six-year graduation and dropout rates could be greater than, less than or equal to the cohort four-year rates. There are three reasons for this discrepancy: 1) count dates; 2) the numerator changes; and 3) the denominator changes.

Students who, in their sixth year, now meet the minimum count dates will be included in that district's and/or building's rates. For example, if a 2009 cohort student was at a building for one count date in the 2008-2009 school year, that student was counted in the district rate only. If, in the student's sixth year, that off-track student attended for another count date in the same building, that student will now be reflected in the denominator of the building's six-year rates.

**Table 8**

Graduation and Dropout Rate Change Examples				
	4-Year Rate	5-Year Rate	Rate Change	Possible Explanation
Graduation Rate	97%	97%	Remains the same	No off-track continuing students graduated in the sixth year (numerator does not change) and no off-track continuing students transferred in or out (denominator does not change).
	97%	99%	Increases	Off-track continuing students graduated in the sixth year.
	97%	95%	Decreases	Off-track students transferred into the district/building or met the minimum number of count dates in the sixth year and are still continuing (increases the denominator).
Dropout Rate	5%	5%	Remains the same	No off-track continuing students dropped out in the sixth year (numerator does not change) and no off-track continuing students transferred in or out (denominator does not change).
	5%	7%	Increases	Off-track continuing students dropped out in the sixth year.
	5%	3%	Decreases	Off-track students transferred into the district/building or met the minimum number of count dates in the sixth year and did not drop out (increases the denominator) or former dropouts complete high school (decreases the numerator).

## Reading the 2009 Cohort Six-year Graduation and Dropout Rate Report

The 2009 cohort six-year graduation rate report includes data for the state, every district and every building from which students graduate. The report is divided into the following eleven columns:

**Table 9**

Column Name	Column Definitions
District/Building Name (Code)	The first line of the report shows the State of Michigan rates, followed by an alphabetical listing of LEAs, then PSAs and then ISDs. The district-level data are identified in shaded rows. The buildings that constitute the district appear below the district name in non-shaded rows that are slightly indented. Although ISDs do not receive graduation rates, their students are included in the state rate.
First Time 9th Grade in Fall 2005	Total number of students who were identified as first-time ninth-graders in fall 2005, which was the group of students who initially formulated the 2009 cohort.
(+) Transfers In	Total number of students who transferred into the state, district or building at any time during the six-year period and remained there.

(-) Transfers Out & Exempt	Total number of transfers out and exempt students. Transfers out are students who transferred out of the district or building and were submitted by a new district. Exempt are those who transferred out of the public school system at any time during the four-year period and did not return (exited to out of state, to nonpublic school or to home-school) Deceased students are also exempt.
Cohort	Total number of students in the 2009 cohort for the state, for each district and for each building after adjustments were made for transfers in, transfers out and exempt students.
On-Track + Off-Track Graduated + Off-Track +5 Graduated	On-Track Graduated: Total number of students in the 2009 cohort who completed high school with a regular diploma in four years or less; or if enrolled in an early/middle college, completed high school with a regular diploma AND an associate degree or other advanced certificate in five years or less. Off-Track Graduated: Total number of students in the 2009 cohort who completed high school with a regular diploma in more than four years; or if enrolled in an early/middle college, completed high school with a regular diploma AND an associate degree or other advance certificate in more than five years.
Dropout (Reported & MER)	Total number of students who left high school permanently at any time during the six-year period, or whose whereabouts are unknown (MER).
Off-Track Continuing	Total number of students who did not complete high school in six years and are still continuing in school.
Other Completer (GED, etc.)	Total number of students who earned a GED or other certificate, or reached special education maximum age.
Graduation Rate	The percentage, calculated as On-Track Graduated + Off-Track Graduated + Off-Track +5 Graduated divided by the 2009 Cohort, of the total number of students in the 2009 cohort who completed high school with a regular diploma in six years or less.
Dropout Rate	This is the percentage, calculated as Dropouts divided by the 2009 Cohort Total, of the total number of students in the 2009 cohort who left high school permanently at any time during the four-year period, or whose whereabouts are unknown.